



# Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman  
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<http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch>

March 30, 2001

## Charter Schools Gain Ground Across America

Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson, a Democrat, this week testified before the Indiana State House and Senate in support of charter schools. Mayor Peterson's backing a charter school initiative reflects the wide bipartisan support for the alternative public schools.

"I believe charter school legislation is one more way to make a difference in the lives of our kids," Mr. Peterson said last month, when the Indiana House Education Committee passed a charter-school bill.

The Midwestern mayor believes that charter schools can free educators from excessive regulation, enabling them to design curricula, set budgets, and hire teachers that best meet the students they serve. Moreover, charter schools, Mayor Peterson says, offer parents and students one more choice within the public school system, cautioning that charter schools must be held accountable for meeting high and clearly measurable academic standards.

Flexibility, accountability, and choice: These are the principles that guide President Bush's *No Child Left Behind* bill (H.R. 1). The President's bill includes a charter school plan that will give disadvantaged students across the nation an alternative to failing schools and a chance to fulfill their educational potential.

### Message of the Day

**The *No Child Left Behind* bill encourages charter school programs and will help charter schools increase student achievement.**

- ❑ *Charter schools offer parents and students a choice within the public school system.*
- ❑ *By affording them flexibility, H.R. 1 encourages what is best about charter schools -- innovation and commitment to results.*
- ❑ *H.R. 1 also holds charter schools strictly accountable for improving student achievement.*

### DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- According to the Education Department, there are approximately 2,000 charter schools in operation today.
- Advantage Schools, a Boston-based firm that manages 15 inner-city charter schools in seven states and the District of Columbia, found a 9.1 point gain on two national standardized tests, including the Stanford 9; the results were for 9,000 students in 1999-2000.
- Western Michigan University researchers found that Pennsylvania charter schools posted gains on state assessments of more than 100 points, out-gaining their host school districts by 86 points.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"As the winds of change in education blow into our communities, let us become the architects of change rather than letting those winds buffet and batter us. Charter schools, by giving choice to families, could become a key feature of the changing face of public education."* **Robert Gottstein, Alaska State Board of Education, *North West Education*, Spring 1997**